

6.0 Guidelines for the Village Planning Area

The goals for the Village Planning Area guidelines are based on the characteristics established for the district in the *Courthouse Area Plan*. It is to be primarily a residential area with some open space parcels and a neighborhood commercial center. It is intended that the residential neighborhoods include both traditional and cluster developments.

6.1. Streetscape Opportunities

Where [houses](#) are set back from the road, it is also recommended that existing old field-type growth of native grasses be retained along the right of way and adjacent front yard spaces. These meadow-type landscapes can be supplemented with native wildflowers. Meadows create an informal landscape character, allowing residential development to blend with the natural environment. Meadow plantings also require less maintenance for the homeowner than traditional turf lawns, which can be planted as desired adjacent to the house. Typically, meadows only require bi-annual mowing.

Recommended typical street dimensions for residential areas within the village-planning district are shown on [Illustration I Typical Residential Street Village Planning District](#). This option applies to streets without on-street parking. Streets should have a sixty-foot right-of-way. Six foot sidewalks would loosely parallel the street within the right-of-way, which also allows space for street tree planting. Native canopy trees are recommended with irregular spacing to reduce the formality of the planting.

Subdivision lots that are adjacent to main roads should have driveway access from internal subdivision streets, not the county roads.

6.2. Landscape Guidelines

Landscape treatments should be compatible with both the images of the Village and the surrounding rural areas. Landscape treatments can serve as a transition between the surrounding rural areas and the denser courthouse district development. In addition they should integrate the neighborhoods with the open space areas which are part of this district. This can be accomplished by using primarily native trees and shrubs in informal type arrangements. Significant plots of existing vegetation should also be retained during the construction process.

Old field area [adjacent to road](#) retains rural character within subdivision

Juxtaposition of [historic farmstead](#). Dabney Farm, and contemporary subdivision entrance to Courthouse Commons with Bradford Pear tree plantings. The use of traditional plant materials complements the historic character of Spotsylvania Courthouse. In this situation and in place of Bradford Pears, native evergreens, such as red cedars, or native hardwoods, such as oaks and maples, would be a complement to the many allees associated with the community's historic farmsteads.

6.3. Signage Guidelines

Signage for subdivisions should be simple and unobtrusive. Monumental signage with brick walls and columns contrasts with the existing and desired rural character of this planning area and should not be used. Commercial signage should also be simple and of small to moderate scale. Commercial signs should be designed to respond to the village character desired for this area. Signs should be in accordance with the County ordinance.

[Existing Subdivision Sign](#) - Scale of this sign is appropriate for the Village District

6.4. Criteria for New Construction/Subdivisions

The focus for new development guidelines is on establishing buffers and conservation zones in order to protect visual, natural, and cultural resources. The general recommendations are the same for both the Village and Transition Districts with some variations for specific items such as setback distance.

6.4.1. Setbacks

Recommended setbacks from the main roads for new subdivisions and residential developments depend upon the extent and type of existing vegetation. In situations where existing wooded areas are allowed to remain ([Illustration J](#)) setbacks can be reduced significantly from the guidelines for open field conditions ([Illustration K](#)). Even with large setbacks in open field situations, it is recommended that a buffer of native evergreen trees be planted adjacent to the first developed lot within the subdivision.

6.4.2. Conservation Zones

Conservation zones are recommended as a way to preserve cultural and natural resources, as well as rural character. Within new residential developments, conservation areas should follow existing streams or wetlands, or extant Civil War related resources such as extant trench work. Conservation areas may be managed one of several ways: as common areas maintained by subdivision homeowners' associations, as properties deeded back to the County, or as individual properties with an easement established for resource protection. Cooperative arrangements with land trusts should also be explored. [Illustrations L](#) and [M](#) show how conservation approaches have been used in the layout of a new subdivision.